

**Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Jonathan Greenert**

Birthday Celebration

9 October 2012

Adm. Greenert: You're wondering can I say beat Army? Well, now that we've taken care of one bit of business last weekend, it's perfectly acceptable to say beat Army.

Thank you very much for joining us this morning. Secretary Mabus, ladies and gentlemen. It's great to have you all here as we start our birthday celebration.

And in typical Navy fashion we say birthday week -- take Monday off. We've got to show up for work Tuesday, Thursday and Wednesday, of course. Friday, Saturday, we've got a lot to do.

Listen, it's important that we take the time to think of our legacy, think of our heritage. It's not all about success stories. It's about hard work and hard lessons learned by those who have gone before us and those who are serving on our behalf, those that you support out there around the world.

The War of Independence, the War of 1812, to Operations Enduring Freedom and Afghanistan today, we have folks out there serving.

This is a special year because it's the 200th commemoration of the War of 1812. From New Orleans up through the whole East Coast, New York City and over into the Great Lakes we've taken the time this year and are continuing to remember our legacy, our heritage and those that went before us; people that paved the way for us to make us the Navy that we are today. That's important- that second War of Independence that was the War of 1812.

For me there are really three particularly enduring lessons as I look at our legacy through that War of 1812 and beyond. Number one, technology matters. If you think about the ships, those first ships in our Navy that were built by those three people, they were high-tech. They had the best equipment, the naval architecture was unsurpassed, and [inaudible] material was great. Where else do you get Old Ironsides but from a ship that was built from the finest material, the finest oak and actually rejected cannonball shots that bounced off its side.

They had competent and proficient crews, number two. These were folks frankly that could shoot straight, they could shoot fast, and they shot often. That was probably one of the main keys of their success against the Royal Navy. Clearly they were outnumbered. Clearly they were new and fledgling, but they were successful because they were practiced at what they do.

That's part of the reason why John Paul Jones said, "The crew means more than guns in the rating of a ship."

Lastly, they had bold and accountable leaders, leaders who were willing to step forward and say, not be told, this is what I need to do, and be willing to take responsibility to be accountable. Captain David Porter. He didn't need to be told, hey maybe it's a good idea if we capture a ship. He went out and realized he had an opportunity and captured a ship of the Royal Navy right in the early days of the War of 1812. And it had an amazing ripple effect in both the tactics, and also the psyche of both navies.

Oliver Hazard Perry who was relentless in the Battle of Lake Erie. And his ship, the Lawrence, which whenever he saw he had to move, and the Lawrence was losing its effectiveness, he said don't give up the ship. He shifted his flag went to the Niagara and continued that great battle which really turned the whole focus and the whole wave, if you will, of the War of 1812 there in Lake Erie.

A lot of people shaping world events before us, defined our Navy. It's very much those same people, people like you who are here today supporting people out in the field that will make a difference.

So accountability. Proficiency, it's in your DNA shaped by people before you. Remember that. They put our Navy on track, on a good course, and on a good speed. I thank you for serving and for supporting the people in the field, whether in uniform or whether in civilian clothes. I thank your families for supporting you because that's what enables you to be who you are.

So Happy Birthday to all of you and to all of us out there in the field.

I'd like to now introduce a man of vision, a man of compassion, our great Secretary of the Navy, the 75th Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus.

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